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October 22, 2019 DIN-05

Mr. Paul Hokeness
DePratti Inc.
13948 Calle Bueno Ganar
Jamul, CA 91935

Subject: Biological Resources Letter Report for the AT&T TJ River South (CAL02225) Telecommunications Project

Dear Mr. Hokeness:

At the request of DePratti, Inc. and on behalf of the City of San Diego (City), HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX) has completed this biological resources summary letter for the AT&T TJ River South (CAL02225) Telecommunications Project (project), which is proposed in the City of San Diego, San Diego County, California. The project would generally consist of the construction of an unmanned wireless communications facility.

The purpose of this report is to document the existing biological conditions within an approximately 1.3-acre survey area encompassing the 0.01-acre project impact area, herein referred to as the project site or site, and provide an analysis of potential impacts to sensitive biological resources with respect to local, state, and federal policies. This report provides the biological resources technical documentation necessary for review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by the City and other responsible agencies for the project.

Figures and other supporting information are provided as enclosures attached to this letter report.

INTRODUCTION

Project Location

The project site is generally located north of the United States/Mexico border, southwest of Interstate 5, and east of the Pacific Ocean in City of San Diego (Figure 1). Specifically, the project site is located immediately east of Hollister Street at 2805 Hollister Street, within Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 664-010-1300 (Figure 2). The site is depicted within Section 3, Township 19 South, Range 2 West, San Bernardino Meridian, California U.S. of the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute Imperial Beach topographic quadrangle (Figure 3).

The proposed project occurs approximately 105 feet south of areas mapped as Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) for the City's Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP). The survey area does not occur within MHPA or USFWS Critical Habitat; however, least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) USFWS Critical Habitat occurs approximately 134 feet north of the nearest project component. The project does occur within the Coastal Zone.

Project Description

The project proposes to construct an unmanned wireless communications facility, including panel antennas mounted on the side of a 30-foot tall faux-water tank, an equipment enclosure on a concrete pad, an AT&T meter pedestal on a concrete slab, and approximately 100 feet of trenching. Proposed underground utility trenching will occur entirely within non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, and developed lands. Trenching will connect the equipment shelter, AT&T meter, and panel antennas to the existing utility point of connection located in the southwestern portion of the survey area (Figure 4). No native habitat or vegetation will be impacted as a result of the project. No direct impacts on sensitive biological resources will occur. As a fundamental component and design feature, the project includes incorporation of the MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines (LUAGs) to prevent any potential indirect impacts.

METHODS

Literature Review

Prior to conducting a biological field survey in 2019, HELIX conducted a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) for information regarding sensitive species known to occur 1,000 feet of the survey area, as well as a review of U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) (USFWS 2019), and SanBIOS sensitive species databases (SanGIS 2017). A search of the San Diego Plant Atlas (San Diego Natural History Museum [SDNHM] 2014) was also conducted.

General Biological Survey

A general biological survey of the survey area was conducted by HELIX biologist Katie Bellon on May 7, 2019. Vegetation was mapped on a 1"=50' scale aerial of the site. A minimum mapping unit size of 0.1 acre was used when mapping upland habitat. The survey area was surveyed on foot and with the aid of binoculars. Plant and animal species observed or otherwise detected were recorded in field notebooks (Attachments A and B). Habitat suitability and potential for occurrence was assessed for special-status species known to the region (Attachments C and D). Animal identifications were made in the field by direct, visual observation or indirectly by detection of calls, burrows, tracks, or scat. Plant identifications were made in the field or in the lab through comparison with photographs. Representative site photos are located in Attachment E.

Basic Wetland Delineation

Prior to beginning fieldwork, aerial photographs (1" =50' scale) and National Wetlands Inventory maps were reviewed to assist in determining the presence or absence of potential jurisdictional areas in the project site. HELIX performed the basic jurisdictional delineation on May 7, 2019, concurrent with the general biological survey. The delineation was conducted to identify and map any water and wetland

resources potentially subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdiction pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA; 33 USC 1344), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) jurisdiction pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA and State Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and streambed and riparian habitat potentially subject to California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) jurisdiction pursuant to Sections 1600 *et seq.* of the California Fish and Game Code (CFG Code). The delineation was also conducted to determine the presence or absence of City Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) wetlands. Areas generally characterized by depressions, drainage features, and riparian and wetland vegetation were evaluated.

Waters of the U.S./Waters of the State

Potential USACE/Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)-jurisdictional waters of the U.S./State were delineated in accordance with the Wetlands Delineation Manual (Environmental Laboratory 1987) and Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region (USACE 2008). Sampling points were located within representative uplands and wetlands, and mapping of drainage features was performed in the field based on the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) and surface indications of hydrology. Areas were determined to be potential wetland waters of the U.S. if there was a dominance of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology indicators. Areas were determined to be non-wetland waters of the U.S. if there was evidence of regular surface flow within an OHWM, but the vegetation and/or soils criterion were not met. No waters of the U.S./waters of the State were present within the survey area.

Streambed and Riparian Habitat

Potential CDFW-jurisdictional streambed and riparian habitat were determined based on the presence of riparian vegetation or regular surface flow. Streambeds within CDFW jurisdiction were delineated based on the definition of streambed as “a body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks and supporting fish or other aquatic life. This includes watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports riparian vegetation” (Title 14, Section 1.72). Potential CDFW jurisdictional unvegetated-streambed encompasses the top-of-slope to top-of-slope width for the ephemeral streams within the survey area. No streambed and riparian habitat were present within the survey area.

City Environmentally Sensitive Lands Wetlands

Potential ESL wetlands were determined based on the predominance of hydrophytic plant species. In addition, areas lacking naturally occurring wetland vegetation communities are still considered wetlands if hydric soil or wetland hydrology is present and past human activities have occurred to remove the historic vegetation. Areas lacking wetland vegetation communities, hydric soils and wetland hydrology due to non-permitted filling of previously existing wetlands will be considered a wetland under the ESL and regulated accordingly; however, seasonal drainage patterns that are sufficient enough to etch the landscape would not satisfy the City’s wetland definition unless wetland dependent vegetation is either present in the drainage or lacking due to past human activities. Naturally occurring wetland vegetation communities include saltmarsh, brackish marsh, freshwater marsh, riparian forest, oak riparian forest, riparian woodland, riparian scrub, and vernal pools. No City ESL wetlands were present within the survey area.

Survey Limitations

Noted animal species were identified by direct observation, vocalizations, or the observance of scat, tracks, or other signs. However, the lists of species identified are not necessarily comprehensive accounts of all species that utilize the survey area as species that are nocturnal, secretive, or seasonally restricted may not have been observed. Those species that are of special status and have potential to occur in the survey area, however, are still addressed in this report (Attachments C and D).

Nomenclature

Nomenclature used in this report generally comes from Holland (1986) and Oberbauer (2008) for vegetation; Baldwin et al. (2014) for plants; Collins and Taggart (2006) for reptiles and amphibians; American Ornithologists' Union (2017) for birds; and Bradley et al. (2014) for mammals. Plant species status is from the California Native Plant Society (CNPS; 2018), CDFW (2019a), and City (2018). Animal species status is from CDFW (2019b and 2018) and City (2018).

RESULTS

Regional Context

The survey area is generally located within the Southern Coast Humid Temperate ecoregion of San Diego County (SDNHM 2014). Mean annual precipitation is approximately eight to 20 inches, and the mean annual temperature is approximately 57 to 64 degrees Fahrenheit. The frost-free period is 200 to 350 days (Natural Resource Conservation Service [NRCS] 2017).

Small livestock farms, horse ranches, and rural development typifies the biological character of the immediately project vicinity; however, the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park (TRVRP) completely surrounds the project site. TRVRP is known to support several sensitive plants and animals. The project site occurs within the MSCP and Coastal Zone, but adjacent to MHPA (Figure 2 and 3).

General Land Uses

The survey area is primarily composed of non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, and developed land, including an existing horse pasture, small livestock farm, and Hollister Street. The surrounding land is generally composed of a few small farms and ranches surrounded by the TRVRP (Figure 3).

Disturbance

The survey area has been heavily disturbed in the past by human activities, which have resulted in those areas now supporting disturbed and developed lands, including a horse pasture, and non-native vegetation. Hollister Street bisects the survey area and will provide general access to the project site. Existing dirt roads within the ranch property will be used for vehicle and tractor access (Figure 7). Developed land is located across the majority of the western portion of the survey area with disturbed habitat dominating the eastern portion of the survey area. Non-native vegetation bisects the study area between developed and disturbed habitat.

Topography and Soils

Elevations in the survey area range from approximately 30 to 40 feet above mean sea level (amsl). The survey area generally consists of a flat area with small graded slopes.

Two soil types have been mapped in the survey area (Figure 5): Chino silt loam, saline, 0 to 2 percent slopes and Visalia sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes. The soils listed within the survey area are not listed as hydric (NRCS 2017).

Vegetation Communities/Habitat Types

Three vegetation communities/habitat types occur in the survey area, as presented in Table 1 and shown on Figure 6. The numeric codes in parentheses following each community/habitat type name are taken from the Holland (Holland 1986) and Oberbauer (2008) classification systems.

Table 1
Vegetation Communities/Habitat Types

Vegetation Communities/Habitat Types	Survey Area (acres)[1]
Non-Native Vegetation/Ornamental (10000)	0.2
Disturbed Habitat (11300)	0.5
Developed (12000)	0.7
TOTAL	**1.3**

[1] The survey area extends 100 feet from the proposed project. Totals reflect rounding.

Non-Native Vegetation/Ornamental

Non-native vegetation or ornamental is a category describing stands of naturalized or ornamental trees and shrubs, many of which are also used in landscaping. Within the survey area non-native vegetation consists primarily of crown daisy (*Glebionis coronaria*) and non-native grasses (*Bromus* spp. and *Avena* sp.) in the center of the survey area immediately west of the project site. In addition, two Goodding's black willow (*Salix gooddingii*) occur at the northern end of the non-native vegetation; however, these willows comprise less than 0.01 acre and are not functioning as a riparian habitat. The willows occur at the base of a small slope below the proposed project site and immediately east of Hollister Street.

Disturbed Habitat

Disturbed habitat includes land cleared of vegetation, land containing a preponderance of non-native plant species such as ornamentals or ruderal exotic species that take advantage of disturbance (previously cleared or abandoned landscaping), or land showing signs of past or present human or animal usage that removes any capability of providing viable habitat. Dominants in this community include sparse non-native vegetation such as crown daisy and black mustard (*Brassica nigra*). Disturbed habitat within the study area primarily consists of a cut slope and a horse pasture within and immediately east of the project site.

Developed

Developed land includes areas that have been constructed upon or otherwise covered with a permanent, unnatural surface and may include, for example, structures, pavement, irrigated landscaping, or hardscape to the extent that no natural land is evident. These areas no longer support native or naturalized vegetation. Developed land in the survey area consists Hollister Street and the farm in the western portion of the study area.

Flora

HELIX identified a total of 20 plant species in the survey area, of which 16 (80 percent) are non-native species (Attachment A).

Fauna

A total of 14 animal species were observed or otherwise detected in the survey area during the biological surveys, including one invertebrate, 12 bird, and one mammal species (Attachment B).

Sensitive Vegetation Communities/Habitat Types

Sensitive vegetation communities/habitat types are defined as land that supports unique vegetation communities or the habitats of rare or endangered species or subspecies of animals or plants as defined by Section 15380 of the State CEQA Guidelines. The City defines sensitive habitat as ESL in their Land Development Code Biology Guidelines (2018). In the context of the City's MSCP Subarea Plan (1997), Tier IIIB types and habitat for rare, endangered, threatened, or narrow endemic species are considered sensitive requiring compensatory mitigation for significant impacts.

Sensitive vegetation communities/habitat types do not occur on site. Pursuant to the City's Biological Guidelines, impacts to Tier IV non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, and developed lands are not considered significant and do not require mitigation (City 2018).

Special Status Species

Special Status Plant Species

Special status plant species have been afforded special status and/or recognition by the USFWS, CDFW, and/or the City and may also be included in the CNPS' Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants. Their status is often based on one or more of three distributional attributes: geographic range, habitat specificity, and/or population size. A species that exhibits a small or restricted geographic range (such as those endemic to the region) is geographically rare. A species may be more or less abundant but occur only in very specific habitats. Lastly, a species may be widespread but exist naturally in small populations.

A total of 42 special status plant species known to the region were analyzed for their potential to occur within the project site (Attachment C). No special status plant species, including MSCP narrow endemic species, were observed within the project site during the May 2019 general biological survey. No special

status plant species, including MSCP narrow endemic species, are likely to occur due to overall lack of suitable conditions and the fact that none were observed during the May 2019 general biological survey.

Special Status Animal Species

Special status animal species include those that have been afforded special status and/or recognition by the USFWS, CDFW, and/or the City. In general, the principal reason an individual taxon (species or subspecies) is given such recognition is the documented or perceived decline or limitations of its population size or geographical extent and/or distribution, resulting in most cases from habitat loss.

A total of 30 special status animal species known to the region were analyzed for their potential to occur within the project site (Attachment D).

No special status animal species were detected in the project site during the May 2019 general biological survey. No special status animal species are likely to occur on site due to overall lack of suitable conditions and the fact that none were observed during the May 2019 general biological survey.

Nesting Birds

The native and non-native trees and shrubs within the non-native vegetation and developed land within the survey area provide suitable nesting habitat for bird species protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and CFG Code.

Raptor Foraging

A red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) was observed west of the survey area and a red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) was observed north of the survey area during the 2019 biological survey. The survey area is less than five acres in size and does not by itself constitute raptor foraging habitat. Raptors with potential to forage over the general area include the above-mentioned species; however, they would not be expected to use the survey area as a primary foraging area due to higher quality habitat and foraging area to the north of the study area. The habitat within the survey area does not provide high quality raptor foraging habitat due to the high level of disturbance and proximity to development.

Jurisdictional Waters and Wetlands

The survey area is characterized entirely as uplands that lack evidence of potential jurisdictional waters and wetlands. No potential wetland conditions were observed in the survey area and no drainage features occur in the survey area. No riparian habitat occurs in the survey area; therefore, there are no resources subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW within the study area.

City Environmentally Sensitive Lands Wetlands

There are no areas within the project site that meet the criteria to be considered City ESL wetlands. No hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soil, or wetland hydrology occur within the project site.

Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife corridors connect otherwise isolated pieces of habitat and allow movement or dispersal of plants and animals. Local wildlife corridors allow access to resources such as food, water, and shelter within the framework of their daily routine. Regional corridors provide these functions over a larger scale and link two or more large habitat areas, allowing the dispersal of organisms and the consequent mixing of genes between populations. A corridor is a specific route that is used for the movement and migration of species and may be different from a linkage in that it represents a smaller or narrower avenue for movement. A linkage is an area of land that supports or contributes to the long-term movement of animals and genetic exchange by providing live-in habitat that connects to other habitat areas. Many linkages occur as stepping-stone linkages that are made up of a fragmented archipelago arrangement of habitat over a linear distance.

The project site does not occur within any known corridors or linkages. No portions of the project site function as linkage or corridor habitat. The proposed project would be located immediately north and east of existing commercial development.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

This section provides a summary of applicable regulations to the proposed project.

Federal Government

Federal Endangered Species Act

Administered by the USFWS, the FESA provides the legal framework for the listing and protection of species (and their habitats) that are identified as being endangered or threatened with extinction. Actions that jeopardize endangered or threatened species and the habitats upon which they rely are considered a "take" under the ESA. Section 9(a) of the ESA defines take as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct." "Harm" and "harass" are further defined in federal regulations and case law to include actions that adversely impair or disrupt a listed species' behavioral patterns.

The USFWS designates critical habitat for endangered and threatened species. Critical habitat is defined as areas of land that are considered necessary for endangered or threatened species to recover. The ultimate goal is to restore healthy populations of listed species within their native habitats so they can be removed from the list of threatened or endangered species. Once an area is designated as critical habitat pursuant to the FESA, all federal agencies must consult with the USFWS to ensure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to result in destruction or adverse modification of the critical habitat. The survey area is not located within critical habitat; however, critical habitat for the least Bell's vireo is located approximately 120 feet north of the project site.

Sections 7 and 10(a) of the FESA regulate actions that could jeopardize endangered or threatened species. Section 7 describes a process of federal interagency consultation for use when federal actions may adversely affect listed species. In this case, take can be authorized via a letter of biological opinion issued by the USFWS for non-marine related listed species issues. A Section 7 consultation (formal or informal) is required when there is a nexus between endangered species' use of a site and impacts to

USACE jurisdictional areas. A Section 10 is used when a project requires no federal permits and does not have federal funding.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

All migratory bird species that are native to the United States or its territories are protected under the federal MBTA, as amended under the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act of 2004 (FR Doc. 05-5127). The MBTA is generally protective of migratory birds but does not actually stipulate the type of protection required. In common practice, the MBTA is now used to place restrictions on disturbance of active bird nests during the nesting season (generally February 1 to August 31). In addition, the USFWS commonly places restrictions on disturbances allowed near active raptor nests.

State of California

California Environmental Quality Act

Primary environmental legislation in California is found in CEQA and its implementing guidelines (State CEQA Guidelines), which require that projects with potential adverse effects (or impacts) on the environment undergo environmental review. Adverse environmental impacts are typically mitigated as a result of the environmental review process in accordance with existing laws and regulations.

California Endangered Species Act

The CESA established that it is state policy to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance state endangered species and their habitats. Under state law, plant and animal species may be formally designated rare, threatened, or endangered by official listing by the California Fish and Game Commission. The CESA authorizes that private entities may "take" plant or wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened under the FESA and CESA, pursuant to a federal Incidental Take Permit if the CDFW certifies that the incidental take is consistent with CESA (CFG Code Section 2080.1[a]). For state-only listed species, Section 2081 of CFG Code authorizes the CDFW to issue an Incidental Take Permit for state listed threatened and endangered species if specific criteria are met.

Native Plant Protection Act

Sections 1900–1913 of the CFG Code (Native Plant Protection Act; NPPA) direct the CDFW to carry out the State Legislature's intent to "…preserve, protect, and enhance endangered or rare native plants of this state." The NPPA gives the California Fish and Game Commission the power to designate native plants as "endangered" or "rare" and protect endangered and rare plants from take.

California Fish and Game Code

Pursuant to CFG Code Section 3503, it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto. Raptors and owls and their active nests are protected by CFG Code Section 3503.5, which states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds of prey or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird unless authorized by the CDFW. Section 3513 states that it is unlawful to take or possess any migratory non-game bird as designated in the MBTA. These regulations could require that construction activities (particularly vegetation removal or construction near nests) be reduced or

eliminated during critical phases of the nesting cycle unless surveys by a qualified biologist demonstrate that nests, eggs, or nesting birds will not be disturbed, subject to approval by CDFW and/or USFWS.

City of San Diego

Environmentally Sensitive Lands

Impacts to biological resources in the City must comply with the City's ESL Regulations. The purpose of the regulations is to "protect, preserve, and, where damaged restore, the environmentally sensitive lands of San Diego and the viability of the species supported by those lands." Environmentally sensitive lands are defined to include sensitive biological resources, steep hillsides, coastal beaches, sensitive coastal bluffs, and 100-year floodplains.

The ESL regulations also restrict development within the MHPA, including impact avoidance areas around raptor nesting locations (specifically, Cooper's hawk, northern harrier [*Circus cyaneus*], golden eagle [*Aquila chrysaetos*], and burrowing owl [*Athene cunicularia*]) and known locations of southern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*), and also requires seasonal restrictions on grading where development may impact the following bird species: western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), least tern (*Sternula antillarum browni*), San Diego cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis*), least Bell's vireo, tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), and coastal California gnatcatcher.

Multiple Species Conservation Program

In July 1997, the USFWS, CDFW, and City adopted the Implementing Agreement for the MSCP. This program allows the incidental take of threatened and endangered species as well as regionally-sensitive species that are conserved by it (covered species). The MSCP designates regional preserves that are intended to be mostly void of development activities, while allowing development of other areas subject to the requirements of the program. Impacts to biological resources are regulated by the City's ESL regulations.

The City's MSCP Subarea Plan (1997) has been prepared to meet the requirements of the California Natural Communities Conservation Planning Act of 1992. This Subarea Plan describes how the City's portion of the MSCP Preserve, the MHPA, will be implemented.

ANALYSIS OF PROJECT EFFECTS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Issue 1 – Special Status Species

Would the project have a substantial adverse impact, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in the Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) or other local or regional plans, policies or regulations, or by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)?

Issue 1 Impact Analysis

Project development has been specifically targeted entirely within existing non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, and developed lands, none of which provide suitable habitat for special status plant and animal species known to the region, as discussed further below.

Five Federally and State Listed plant species and another 38 California Rare Plant Rank (CNPR) plant species are known to occur within three miles of the proposed project site; however, none of these species has a potential to occur on or in the immediate vicinity of the project site due to lack of suitable habitat. The existing conditions are characterized by non-native vegetation, disturbed land, and developed land associated with the current and previous agricultural (e.g., ranchland, horse pasture, small livestock farm) and transportation (e.g., Hollister Street) uses. Therefore, no special status plant species are expected to be directly or indirectly impacted by the project.

Of the 42 Federally or State Listed animal species known to occur within three miles of the proposed project site, the coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*; Federally Threatened) and least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*; Federally and State Endangered) have a potential to occur off site to the north within the adjacent MHPA. Eighteen additional special status animal species, including species designated as sensitive by the CDFW and under the MSCP, are known to occur within three miles of the proposed project. Of these, Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*; State Watch List; MSCP Covered Species) and northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*; State Species of Special Concern; MSCP Covered Species) also have a potential to occur off site to the north within the adjacent MHPA.

If avoidance measures are not in place during construction, the project could result in significant indirect impacts to these species and other resources potentially occurring off-site within the MHPA. As a fundamental component and design feature, the project will incorporate the MHPA LUAGs identified below to prevent any potential indirect impact on the adjacent MHPA. Potential operation noise from equipment, such as on-site generators and HVAC units, would be attenuated by the equipment shelter, and would not exceed 60 dBA within the MHPA (HELIX 2019). The noise impact analysis prepared for this project calculated that noise from equipment would be approximately 49.1 dBA within the MHPA (HELIX 2019); therefore, project operation noise from equipment would not significantly impact the coastal California gnatcatcher or least Bell's vireo, including the long-term survival of either species.

The project would not require impacts to vegetation or structures that could support nesting birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game (CFG) Code. Therefore, no direct impacts are anticipated. As a regulatory requirement and to prevent any potential indirect impacts, the project must comply with the regulations and guidelines of the MBTA and CFG

Code. The incorporation of the MHPA LUAGs below will further ensure that no indirect impacts occur to nesting birds and tree-nesting raptors.

Land Use Adjacency Guidelines

Section 1.4.3 of the MSCP requires implementation of LUAGs to projects located within or adjacent to the MHPA to address drainage, toxics, lighting, noise, barriers, invasive species, brush management, and grading. Conformance with the MHPA LUAGs is a standard requirement as part of conditions of approval in the City and required to be included as "Environmental Requirements" on future construction plans.

Drainage: *All new and proposed parking lots and developed areas in and adjacent to the preserve must not drain directly into the MHPA. All developed and paved areas must prevent the release of toxins, chemicals, petroleum products, exotic plant materials and other elements that might degrade or harm the natural environment or ecosystem processes within the MHPA.*

The project will not drain directly into the MHPA and will not release toxins, chemicals, petroleum products, or exotic plant materials, or otherwise degrade or harm the natural environment or ecosystem processes within the MHPA. Impervious surfaces and developed areas associated with the project are limited to the approximately 130-square-foot concrete pad for the equipment enclosure. The concrete pad would not drain directly into the MHPA due to the topography and the separation of the pad from the MHPA by approximately 105 feet of disturbed uplands.

Toxics: *Land uses, such as recreation and agriculture, that use chemicals or generate by-products such as manure, that are potentially toxic or impactive to wildlife, sensitive species, habitat, or water quality need to incorporate measures to reduce impacts caused by the application and/or drainage of such materials into the MHPA.*

The project does not include any land uses or other components that generate toxic or impactive chemicals and by-products. The project is an unmanned cellular telecommunications facility that does not require chemicals or materials that could generate harmful by-products. Further, the developed areas associated with the project would not drain directly into the MHPA.

Lighting: *Lighting of all developed areas adjacent to the MHPA should be directed away from the MHPA.*

No project lighting is required adjacent to the MHPA. The project is separated from the MHPA by approximately 105 feet of disturbed uplands. Any lighting required for safety will be shielded and directed away from the MHPA to the north.

Noise: *Uses in or adjacent to the MHPA should be designed to minimize noise impacts. Berms or walls should be constructed adjacent to commercial areas, recreational areas, and any other use that may introduce noises that could impact or interfere with wildlife utilization of the MHPA.*

A noise study was completed for the project and land uses adjacent to the MHPA were evaluated (HELIX 2019). The study demonstrated that project operation noise will be in compliance with the City noise ordinances and would adversely affect resources potentially occurring within the MHPA.

Barriers: *New development adjacent to the MHPA may be required to provide barriers (e.g., non-invasive vegetation, rocks/boulders, fences, walls, and/or signage) along the MHPA boundaries to direct public access to appropriate locations and reduce domestic animal predation.*

The project is an unmanned cellular telecommunications facility located on private property and separated from the MHPA by 105 feet of disturbed uplands. Existing barriers are present that would preclude access into the MHPA. The project does not include components that would enhance or increase public access or domestic animal use. Operational access to the facility will be restricted to operations and maintenance personnel.

Invasives: *No invasive non-native plant species shall be introduced into areas adjacent to the MHPA.*

The project will not include invasive species in any of the landscape planting. Additionally, implementation of BMPs during construction would include measures to avoid introduction of invasive plants into the construction site and dispersal of invasive plants from the construction site by equipment.

Brush Management: *New residential development located adjacent to and topographically above the MHPA (e.g., along canyon edges) must be set back from slope edges to incorporate Zone 1 brush management areas on the development pad and outside of the MHPA. Zones 2 and 3 will be combined into one zone (Zone 2) and may be located in the MHPA upon granting of an easement to the City (or other acceptable agency) except where narrow wildlife corridors require it to be located outside of the MHPA.*

The project is an unmanned cellular telecommunications facility separated from the MHPA by 105 feet of relatively flat disturbed lands that are mostly unvegetated. The project would not conflict with this guideline.

Grading/Land Development: *Manufactured slopes associated with site development shall be included within the development footprint for projects within or adjacent to the MHPA.*

The project does not include manufactured slopes and the limited grading that is required is contained within the development footprint of the project.

Issue 1 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Conclusions

No direct impacts on sensitive species would occur. The project will incorporate the MHPA LUAGs addressed above to ensure no significant indirect impacts occur to off-site resources potentially occurring within the off-site MHPA, including sensitive species.

Issue 2 – Riparian Habitat and Sensitive Natural Communities

Would the project have a substantial adverse impact on any Tier I Habitats, Tier II Habitats, Tier IIIA Habitats, or Tier IIIB Habitats as identified in the Biology Guidelines of the Land Development manual or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS?

Issue 2 Impact Analysis

The project has been designed to avoid direct impacts to Tier habitats and sensitive natural communities. Non-native vegetation within the study area contains two Goodding's black willows. The willows are located at the bottom of a small slope below the proposed project site and east of Hollister Street. These willows comprise less than 0.01 acre and are not functioning as a riparian habitat. Furthermore, the willows will not be impacted during project implementation. The project components and trenching routes for telco and power have been restricted to non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, and developed lands. The proposed enclosed equipment area is also situated entirely within non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, and developed lands; therefore, no direct impacts to sensitive habitat would occur.

Issue 2 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Conclusion

The project would not result in an impact to Tier habitats or sensitive vegetation communities. No mitigation is required.

Issue 3 – Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waterways

Would the project have a substantial adverse impact on wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, riparian, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Issue 3 Impact Analysis

Based on the general biological survey, National Wetland Inventory (USFWS 2018), and aerial imagery (Google Earth 2018), no wetlands occur within or adjacent to the project site; therefore, the project would not result in any impacts to federally-, state-, or City-protected wetlands; however, the project site does occur within a Federal Emergency Management Agency 100-year floodplain.

Issue 3 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Conclusion

The project would not result in impacts to federally-, state-, or City-protected wetlands, and no mitigation is required.

Issue 4 – Wildlife Movement and Nursery Sites

Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, including linkages identified in the MSCP Plan, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Issue 4 Impact Analysis

Due to the small size, the project would not impede the movement of any native, resident, or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native, resident, or migratory wildlife corridors. In addition, the project would not interfere with linkages identified in the MSCP Plan or use of native wildlife nursery sites. The project is bordered by urban development to the south, east, and west; however, undeveloped, MHPA lands are to the north of the project. Wildlife has the potential to travel adjacent to project components; however, the project does not have the potential to impede movement. Impacts are considered less than significant.

Issue 4 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Conclusion

Project implementation would not result in significant impacts on wildlife movement and nursery sites. No mitigation is required.

Issue 5 – Adopted Plans

Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan, either within the MSCP plan area or in the surrounding region?

Issue 5 Impact Analysis

As stated above, project developments will be entirely restricted to non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, and developed lands that lack sensitive biological resources; therefore, no direct impacts on sensitive biological resources would occur, including those addressed under the adopted City MSCP Subarea Plan (1997). As a fundamental component and design feature, the project will incorporate the MHPA LUAGs identified above within Issue 1 to prevent any potential indirect impact on sensitive biological resources with potential to occur off site to the north within the MHPA. No other adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Special Area Management Plan, Watershed Plan, or other regional planning efforts are applicable to the project.

Issue 5 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Conclusion

The project would not conflict any adopted plans, including the MSCP. The project will incorporate the MHPA LUAGs addressed above to ensure no significant indirect impacts occur to off-site resources potentially occurring within the off-site MHPA.

Issue 6 – Land Use Adjacency

Would the project introduce land use within an area adjacent to the MHPA that would result in adverse edge effects?

Issue 6 Impact Analysis

The project would not introduce land use within an area adjacent to the MHPA that would result in adverse edge effects. The total impact area of the project is less than 0.1 acre and the project has been designed to be restricted to non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, and developed lands. The equipment will be enclosed within a shelter to shield adjacent habitat from noise. No lighting is proposed that would adversely affect adjacent habitat. No landscaping is proposed that would introduce non-native invasive species to the area. The project has been specifically designed within non-native vegetation, disturbed habitat, and developed lands, and no sensitive Tier I-III habitats occur within or immediate adjacent to the project site. The project site would not be open to the public and would have minimal construction and operational impacts.

The analysis provided above within Issue 1 demonstrates project consistency with the MHPA LUAGs. The LUAG shall be carried forward as conditions of approval for the project.

Issue 6 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Conclusion

The project will incorporate the MHPA LUAGs addressed above to ensure no significant indirect impacts occur to off-site resources potentially occurring within the off-site MHPA.

Issue 7 – Local Policies or Ordinances

Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources?

Issue 7 Impact Analysis

As described above, the project has been specifically sited and designed to minimize impacts to biological resources addressed in the City's MSCP Subarea Plan (1997) and Land Development Code (2018). Incorporation of the project design features and MHPA LUAGs would ensure project consistency

with the MSCP and that impacts to species and ESL are avoided in accordance with Land Development Code requirements.

Issue 7 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Conclusion

Incorporation of the project design features and MHPA LUAGs would ensure project consistency with the MSCP and that impacts to species and ESL are avoided in accordance with Land Development Code requirements.

Issue 8 – Invasive Species

Would the project result in an introduction of invasive species of plants into a natural open space area?

Issue 8 Impact Analysis

If appropriate measures are not in place, the project could result in the introduction of invasive species of plants into a natural open space area. Introduction of invasive plant species could occur via contaminated construction equipment or project landscaping.

The project includes incorporation of the MHPA LUAGs, including those pertaining to invasive species. Invasive species will be restricted from any of landscape planting. Additionally, implementation of BMPs during construction would include measures to avoid introduction of invasive plants into the construction site and dispersal of invasive plants from the construction site by equipment.

Issue 8 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Conclusion

The project would not result in an introduction of invasive plant species and includes incorporation of the MHPA LUAGs and BMPs, including restrictions from using invasive species in project landscaping and standard construction practices to prevent invasive species introduction and dispersal from construction sites.

CONCLUSION

A biological resources technical study has been completed for the proposed project in accordance with the City's Biology Guidelines (City 2018). The project is an unmanned cellular telecommunications facility proposed within existing developed land, disturbed land, and other disturbed areas characterized by non-native vegetation. No sensitive biological resources occur or have the potential to occur within the project site. Therefore, the project would result in no direct impacts on sensitive biological resources.

Off-site habitat associated with the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park and within the MHPA overlay occurs approximately 105 feet to the north of the project site. This off-site habitat has the potential to support sensitive biological resources, including special status species, sensitive natural communities, wetlands, and other resources. As a fundamental component and design feature, the project includes the incorporation of the MHPA LUAGs to ensure that no adverse or significant indirect impacts occur on any off-site resources associated with the MHPA to the north. With the incorporation of the MHPA LUAGs, the project would have no impacts on biological resources and would be consistent with the MSCP.

CLOSING

We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with this report. I certify that the information in this report and enclosures are correct and accurately represent my work. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Katie Bellon at (619) 462-1515 if you have any questions or require further assistance.

Sincerely,

Karl Osmundson
Biology Group Manager

Enclosures:

Figure 1	Regional Location
Figure 2	USGS Topography
Figure 3	Aerial Vicinity
Figure 4	Project Site Plan
Figure 5	Soils
Figure 6	Vegetation and Sensitive Resources
Figure 7	Vegetation and Sensitive Resources Impacts
Attachment A	Plant Species Observed
Attachment B	Animal Species Observed or Detected
Attachment C	Sensitive Plant Species with Potential to Occur
Attachment D	Sensitive Animal Species with Potential to Occur
Attachment E	Representative Site Photos

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